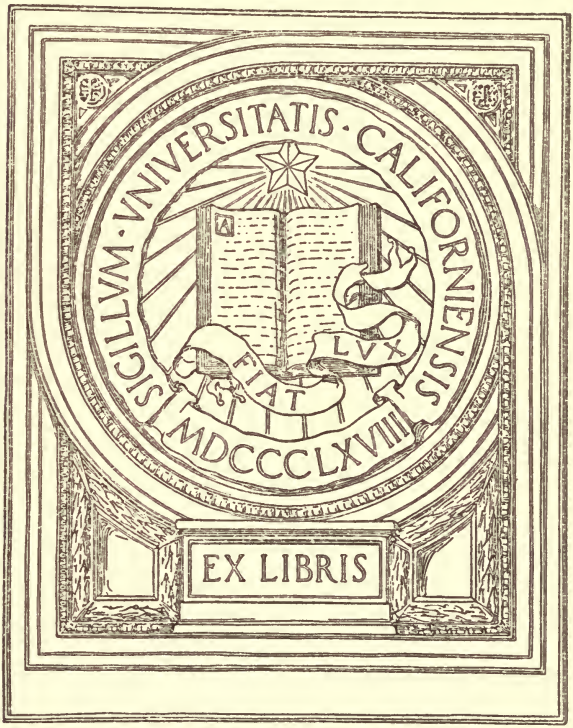
THREE WEEKS IN POLITICS

BY

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

HARPER'S BLACK & WHITE SERIES



IMAGINED HIMSELF FAMOUS

THREE WEEKS IN POLITICS

OR, THE GREAT CONVENTION

BY

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

AUTHOR OF "COFFEE AND REPARTEE"

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TO

FRANCIS P. TREANOR

"A FRIEND IN NEED"

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I

INTRODUCTION

THE Idiot had been away from Mrs. Smithers-Pedagog's charming home for single gentlemen for nearly a month, and it must be admitted that even the school-master, with whom he was rarely known to agree, missed him.

"I never regarded that fellow as a luxury," Mr. Pedagog remarked, after an unusually peaceful series of breakfasts, "nor have I ever deemed him a necessity; but I will say candidly that I now think him a little of both."

"I'm disposed to agree with you," said the Bibliomaniac. "Breakfast hasn't seemed half as exciting without him as it

is with him, and I for one heartily wish him back."

"Humph!" ejaculated the Doctor. "Every man to his taste. I once had a patient who looked back upon the mumps with pleasure, and I have known persons who enjoyed the measles; but as for the Idiot, I miss him not at all, and if he comes back he'll find my welcome served cold with sauce piquante."

"You mustn't be too severe with him," said Mr. Pedagog. "He is queer, no doubt, but I'm fond of him. I don't think he has much badness in his make-up."

"No," said the Doctor. "No—I don't think the Idiot would kill a man or rob a jewelry store."

"Where is he, anyhow?" asked Mr. Whitechoker. "Gone home to see his father?"

"Not this time," said Mrs. Pedagog. "He has a friend who is running for Mayor somewhere up the river, and he's gone up to help his friend out. If his friend gets elected, the Idiot says he's to be appointed Receiver of Taxes and Prime-Minister."

"Hoh!" laughed the Doctor. "Hoh! The Idiot! Prime-Minister! I'd like to live in that town for five minutes if he gets it. A three-ringed circus would be tame alongside of it. Where is this favored burg?"

"I think it's called Phillipseburg by plain people," said Mrs. Pedagog; "though Phillipseburg-on-the-Dunwoodie is the way it is designated by polite society there—at least, that is what the Idiot says. His friend Perkins—"

"Thaddeus Perkins, the writer?" interrupted the Bibliomaniac.

"Yes, he's the man," said Mrs. Pedagog. "Thaddeus Perkins has been nominated by the Democrats, and the Idiot is very anxious to have him defeated, so he has gone to Phillipseburg to see what his chances of success are and to destroy them if possible—or so he says. I fancy that deep down in his heart the Idiot wants him elected."

"Well, if any man can defeat him, the Idiot is the man to do it. If Perkins will only take the Idiot's advice, the cares of office will never oppress him," said the Doctor.

"By Jove!" cried the Bibliomaniac, glancing over the morning paper, "he has done it. The election came off yesterday."

"And Perkins is defeated?" said the Doctor.

"Yes!" the Bibliomaniac replied. "Here's what it says: '*Poetry Snowed Under in Phillipseburg! Coal on Top. Perkins Spared to Literature by an Overwhelming Majority. The Administration Rebuked.*'"

"What nonsense!" said Mr. Whitechoker. "What have coal and poetry to do with it?"

"Everything," said the Bibliomaniac. "Perkins is a poet, and the rival candidate was a coal-dealer."

"I fancy the people realized that coal burns better than poetry," suggested Mr. Pedagog.

The Poet sighed.

"If they do, it shows how little they know about poetry," he said, with a sad smile.

And then, even as the Poet spoke, the door opened, and the long-lost Idiot appeared. He looked jaded.

"Hullo!" he said, with a smile of greeting, as he entered the room. "I'm back."

"I judged so," said the Doctor, coldly. "A man who appears on the scene after a long absence generally is back."

"A lucid diagnosis," said the Idiot, drawing up a chair, after shaking hands with Mrs. Pedagog. "And how have you all been?"

"Disconsolate," said the Poet. "We have missed you."

"Glad to hear it," said the Idiot. "I can't return the compliment, however. I haven't had time to miss anybody, not even you. I wish I had, because then I might have missed several persons I've sincerely wished to miss. I've simply been overrun for the past three weeks with people who would do their country a great service if they'd disappear and never come back."

"I see by the paper," said the Bibliomaniac, "that you failed to land your man."

"That's erroneous," returned the Idiot. "We did land our man high and dry. He struggled hard to prevent our saving

him, but with the aid of the good people of Phillipseburg we got him out of a very tight place. He'd have been elected if it hadn't been for me and the voters, and for two years to come he'd have had more trouble than he ever dreamed of. That's the trouble with poets; they don't look ahead. They can't. They've been taught to look within—to spend their lives in self-contemplation, and then to startle the world with accounts of what they see there. That's why poets so often suffer from what the vulgar call the big-head. Perkins can see from one end of a poem to another, but he can't open history and see through it as clearly as some others can. Before he took this nomination I said to him, 'My dear boy, let others make history; content yourself with writing it.' But Perkins didn't see it in that light. He had a tax-bill in his pocket that he couldn't pay, and he was mad. I believe he would have run for Game Constable if they'd asked him, just for the sake of trying to reform the country. He was after power, and he came near getting it. He lost only three wards out of

five, and I verily believe that a dozen kegs of beer and a little self-denial in the matter of wearing a new silk hat and patent-leather shoes everywhere he went would have changed the result."

"What earthly influence could silk hats and patent-leather shoes have on the result?" queried Mr. Pedagog.

"I don't know," said the Idiot; "but I do know that two of the most astute politicians in the place begged him for hours to wear a brown slouched hat he had left over from two seasons ago when he went campaigning; and when Thaddeus attended a mass-meeting in full evening dress the chairman of the General Committee threatened to resign unless Perkins went home and put on a sack-coat. 'Cut-aways is bad enough,' he said, 'but claw-hammers is ruin. Who proposed this man, anyway?'"

"And wouldn't he give in?" asked the Doctor.

"He might have, if it hadn't been for me," said the Idiot. "But I told him to stick to his clothes. As I said to him, they ought to have found out what kind

of clothes he wore before he was nominated. He agreed to that fully, but he had a strong reason for wavering. 'I don't want to lose this fight and have the Administration rebuked simply because I like to be well dressed,' he said. 'If I can save the party by wearing overalls and three-dollar shoes, I'm willing to make the sacrifice.'"

"He certainly was a tractable candidate," said Mr. Whitechoker.

"He was, in the beginning," said the Idiot. "But as the campaign proceeded he acquired a nerve which in office would be fine, but which, in a contest for office, is the last thing a man ought to have. If you've ever any of you been in politics, you've probably noticed that if a candidate is to come out like a lion, he's got to go in like a lamb, and retain his lamb-like qualities until the votes are counted. After the votes are counted he can be any animal he pleases. Barring my efforts, the thing that defeated Thaddeus was that he was a lamb the first week, a bear the second, and a perfect hyena the third. Why, just after his nomination

he was as genial as could be—he had every element of popularity. Anybody could stop him in the street and ask him for the City Treasurership or a dime, and Thaddeus would put him off so politely that the man who wanted to be City Treasurer felt certain that he was going to get the place, and the fellow who asked for the dime would have given Thaddeus a dollar for the campaign fund if he'd been asked for it and had it to give. The second week he seemed to be cultivating a reserve which was encouraging to his friends who didn't want him elected. He could have worn overalls and brogans that second week without helping his cause a bit. He had a full-dress manner about him which all the overalls and brogans in the world could not have counteracted. Candidates, politicians, voters calling upon him were received, and no more. He didn't try to hit anybody, but it was evident that he was yearning for the independence of the poet, and for people calling on campaign business his house took on many of the qualities of a first-class refrigerator.

"'For Heaven's sake, take him to Lakewood, if you can,' said his campaign manager. 'What do you suppose he did yesterday?'

"'I give it up,' said I. 'What?'

"'He told a delegation from the Ivy Club that if there was a certificate of election in every keg of beer in Christendom, he wouldn't buy one if they cost a cent a million, and to-night the Ivy Club's out in the papers for the other man. Get him away. We'll hire an actor to come up here to play his part, and *I'll* write the lines. Sixty-two votes gone at a clip!'"

"Is it really true that people ask candidates for beer?" asked Mr. Whitechoker. "I have heard that it is done, but I never believed it."

"They do that immoral thing sometimes," said the Idiot. "And they get it, too. Why, one night last week Perkins and I were playing bezique in the library, while the maid was staving off delegations out in the hall, telling them that the candidate was out in the Fourth Ward, addressing the Taxpayers' Griev-

WANTED A DIME

ance Association, when, ting-a-ling-a-ling, the telephone began to ring. I won't say what Thaddeus said. It was near the end of his hyena-week, and he had a disposition like a man who has been flayed alive. The intent of his remark, however, was that he'd have that telephone pulled out by the roots if it tung-a-lung once more. After calming him down I went to the 'phone, and this is what occurred:

"'H'lo!' said the man at the other end.

"'Well?' said I.

"'Who is this?'

"'Me!'

"'Who the blank is me?'

"'Who are you?'

"'Well, I'm MacNamara, see? All I've gottersay is, is this Perkinses?'

"'It is.'

"'Is he home?'

"'No.'

"'Then he might as well get off from the ticket. I'm down on Parker Place, and the whole street's flooded with Burns's beer. For the sake of Tariff Reform, send a keg down to the Parker

Place Independent Club before nine. I've been standin' these fellers off for two and a half weeks now, and the boys are gettin' blanked dry.'

"'We haven't any money for beer.'

"'Then, for the love of the party, ring up your neighbors and borrow some — I tell you the thing can't be done without oiling up the machine. Perkins hadn't oughter gone into this 'fe wasn't willin' to set 'em up.'

"'But his principles—'

"'Blank principles. I'm talkin' kegs, not principles. Do we get the kegs or not?'

"'Nary a keg.'

"'Aw, say — why, I'm standin' knee-deep in the other man's beer now.'

"'Then, what are you growling about? Why don't you kneel down and quench your thirst?'

"'We want *your* beer! We don't like drinkin' with the enemy.'

"'Well, I've told you we haven't any.'

"'Ah-h-h! You're fine demmycrats, ain't yer! *Diss* is what comes o' puttin' up a Mugwump. Dere ain't no life in de Mugs!'

"'No,' I replied, seeing an opportunity to lose a few more votes. 'No. What you fellows want is a Jugwump. If it isn't too late, you'd better nominate an Independent candidate who'll stand up for Keg and Country!'

"Whereupon MacNamara consigned Perkins and me to everlasting torment, hung up the telephone-receiver, and I presume went swimming in the beer of the enemy; at any rate, two days later he and his followers sobered up sufficiently to pass resolutions stating that while the Parker Place Independent Club was still true to Democratic ideas, they thought that in local matters national politics should be lost sight of, and that on general principles a man who sold coal in Phillipseburg was likely to make a better Mayor than a man who went to New York to peddle poetry."

"I must confess," said Mr. Pedagog, "that I think their conclusions were sound, whatever may have been their premises."

"I agree with you," said the Idiot. "That is why I wanted Thaddeus de-

feated. A Mayor needs a certain bluff quality in his make-up which Thaddeus hasn't got. His messages need to have all the bluff characteristics of a coal-bill and none of that indirection which poets get so in the habit of using. If streets could be opened with sonnets, or Aldermen quelled with quatrains, Thaddeus would have been a Wellington among Mayors."

"A Whittington you mean, do you not?" suggested the Bibliomaniac, superciliously.

"I do not," said the Idiot. "I mean Wellington. I was going to say Napoleon, but Napoleon met his Wellington, which Perkins never would have done if, as I have said, a town could be governed by rondeaux, which it can't, particularly a town like Phillipseburg, where few of the inhabitants know an anapæstic measure from a bushel basket, and where you could get a leading citizen to sign a petition requiring the substitution of hexameters for water-meters in all private dwellings with your eyes shut."

"This Phillipseburg must be a queer spot," said the Bibliomaniac.

"It is," said the Idiot, as he left the table. "In which respect it resembles every other spot in the universe."

II

GENERAL COMMITTEES AND OTHER THINGS

THE next morning, when Mrs. Pedagog's guests took their accustomed places at the breakfast-table, Mr. Pedagog was smiling broadly over something in the morning paper.

"Your friend Perkins is getting it from his brothers in poetry to-day," he said to the Idiot.

"No doubt," observed the Idiot. "That's a queer thing about poets. There's nothing they like better than a chance to write each other up. That's the only way they can ever get away from themselves. They grow weary of writing up their own emotions at times, and then they dally with the emotions of their fellows. What's the poem about?"

"It's a nursery rhyme," said Mr. Ped-

agog. "It is called 'Mother Goose in Phillipseburg,' and reads as follows:

"'A poet once in our town
He was so wondrous wise,
He jumped deep into politics,
But failed to win the prize.

"'And when he saw the prize was gone,
With all his might and main,
He gathered up his strength and sprang
To poetry again.

"'And when he made his statement up
To show what he had spent,
It broke that poet's soul to note
Its terrible extent.

"'For sixty miles of solid verse,
Writ with his usual skill,
He found 'twould take to bring him out
Just even with his bill.'"

"That's good," said the Idiot. "I know the man who wrote that, and he's a first-rate fellow—bright as a button. He wrote several of the interviews with Perkins that appeared in that journal. He

spent a funny day at Perkins's house with him, getting points; not from Perkins, but from the house. Perkins wouldn't talk about the contest because there was nothing to say. If he had been a demagogue he could have found plenty of things to talk about, but unfortunately he wasn't, so the poor reporter had to content himself with getting enough local color from the house to make his imaginative interview appear truthful."

"I think the candidate made a mistake in receiving the man at all," said Mr. Pedagog.

"No—that wasn't his mistake," said the Idiot. "His error lay in his confidence that men he had known for many years, with some of whom he had been professionally associated, would see that he had fair play. However, that's a mere detail, after all. To come back to the individual poet who has written him up; as I have said, Perkins received him in his home; he smoked Perkins's cigars; drank his wine; ate two meals with him and his family, and in all probability wrote the poem with Perkins's pen on Perkins's

table with Perkins's ink. It takes a very clever man in these days to do that sort of work. It isn't as easy as you may think. In the first place, consider the man's feelings all through those eight hours that he spent in Perkins's home, receiving the attention always accorded by gentlemen to gentlemen. They must have subjected his nervous system to a terrible strain. The knowledge that he was received in the house on one footing, with the consciousness that he had come there for the sole purpose of making his host ridiculous if he could, must really entitle him to our sympathy; and he passed through the ordeal well. He carried it off splendidly. You never would have supposed that he was suffering; and when he went away to write Perkins down an ass, he squeezed his hand just as a friend might have done, and in all sincerity that squeeze came really from his heart. He was sorrier for himself than he was for Perkins."

"He couldn't have been much of a gentleman," said Mrs. Pedagog.

"Oh yes, he was," rejoined the Idiot;

"that is, he was a gentleman personally. Professionally, however, he was no more of one than is a soldier in an army who has to do something against his wishes and in violation of his instincts in obedience to the commands of his superior officer. The reporter is simply a part of a machine. He goes where he is sent, and does what he is sent to do, no matter how abhorrent the commission may be to him. It is the fault of the system, not of the man—or so Thaddeus put it. The fact is that the reporters bear the odium which should fall upon the editors. The same man who condemns the reporter for indecency would receive the editor with open arms, forgetting that the reporter is doing, through necessity, what the editor's choice bids him to do. Perkins was willing and glad to see the reporter, but he would have kicked the editor out of his house."

"I never looked at it in that light before," said Mr. Pedagog.

"Well, it's the only light to look at it in," rejoined the Idiot. "When in battle an enemy is routed or victorious the dis-

credit or the credit falls upon the commanding officer. In the newspaper world the same rules should be observed. It is the commanding officer who receives the credit; his should be the discredit also."

"How do they nominate candidates for such offices as Mayor?" queried Mr. Pedagog. "In convention?"

"No," said the Idiot; "it is by the direct vote of the people. They are nominated at the primaries. Any man who has money enough to pay for his tickets can enter the race. Primaries are mighty interesting things. Thaddeus never went to a primary until it became necessary for him to manifest an interest. He had been placed in nomination by one of the local newspapers, and much to his surprise discovered that the main question that was agitating the public was not as to his fitness, but as to his existence. Ninety per cent. of the people in the town had never heard of him; ninety-five per cent. had never seen him, although he was born in the town and had lived there twenty out of his thirty-two years of life. The trouble with him was, politically, that he

wasn't known to the saloons, rarely attended the firemen's balls, and was not given to making himself conspicuous generally. To find himself almost entirely unknown in his own town was the bitterest pill he had to swallow. A man who has received letters from Wisconsin asking for his autograph, and from Texas asking for his photograph for preservation in the Galveston Historical Society, fondly imagines that he cuts a figure in the world; but when he travels on the railway and hears two citizens of his own town asking each other who the devil he is, and what in thunder he looks like, and where in creation does he live, his pride suffers a shock, and his children are apt to go to bed that night feeling that the old man isn't the centre of geniality they have fancied."

"Then Perkins isn't known to his own town?" asked Mr. Whitechoker.

"Not very well," said the Idiot; "he's known better now than he was. But that didn't make any difference as far as getting the nomination was concerned. One man proposed his name to two men,

two men proposed it to four, and the four called the General Committee together. Thaddeus was dragged out of his library and exhibited to the General Committee, and they, observing the patent-leather shoes and the silk hat, decided that if he would have his tickets printed he'd do."

"But — excuse me," said Mr. Whitechoker, "I thought you said yesterday that silk hats and patent-leather shoes killed a man politically."

"That's with voters," explained the Idiot. "With General Committees it's different. The General Committee had a notion that a man who could afford to wear patent-leather shoes and a silk hat in hard times like these was a good man to—to run. They thought his leg would pan out well."

"Leg?" cried Mrs. Pedagog.

"That's the word," said the Idiot, with a smile. "In politics, Mrs. Pedagog, there is a language that is as distinct from that of the general world as the language of love is distinct from that of commerce. The verb 'to-pull-his-leg'

means to extract from his pocket all the lucre it will yield. For instance, the candidate who says 'I will win that office if it costs a leg' means 'I'll spend all I've got to win.' In short, 'leg' is a contraction for 'bank account,' derived, I presume, from the word 'legacy.' So it was that Thaddeus appealed to the General Committee, although he did not know it at the time; and when, after his nomination, the General Committee began to discover that while Thaddeus was a tariff reformer in national politics, he was also an extreme protectionist as far as his leg was concerned, they perceptibly cooled, and some of them became so icy that on election day they slid over to the other side, according to common report."

"Are the Republican General Committees as bad as that?" asked Mr. Whitechoker.

"I think it very likely, only they do their work more piously," said the Idiot. "Republican General Committees never have less than two vestrymen and one ex-Judge upon them, but, as far as I have been able to find out, their work is just

as efficacious, as far as the elongation of the candidate's limb is concerned, and when they tax their veracity it is always an indirect tax. Understand that these people gain no personal advantage from this leg-pulling exercise. None of the candidate's money goes into their own pockets, but it is useful for 'incidentals,' which is merely a political synonym for Independent Clubs, beer, cigars, and so forth. Individually these men are the soul of honor. They cannot be bought or sold, but they regard themselves as purchasing agents in the candidate's behalf, and feeling that way they naturally prefer to represent a man of good financial standing."

"How dreadful!" cried Mr. Whitechoker. "Do you mean to say that a vestryman can be a party to the purchase of votes?"

"Not at all!" said the Idiot, impatiently. "Don't misunderstand me, I beg of you. I don't believe anybody ever bought a vote anywhere. What they do with the money is to establish headquarters for the Independent Clubs. It's really a moral step. If headquarters for Indepen-

dent Clubs were not established the members of those clubs would spend their time in the saloons instead of at the club headquarters. Can't you see that? Of course it sometimes happens that the only rooms available are directly above, below, or behind the saloons, but they are not *in* the saloons, which is all the average vestryman can ask."

"And do the candidates visit these clubs and address them on the questions of the day?" asked Mr. Pedagog.

"They do when they are not afraid of the questions of the day," replied the Idiot. "In this campaign of Perkins's the main question of the day has been 'Well, boys, what 'll you have?' To this there have been two answers. One of the answers was 'Beer.'"

"And the other?" queried the Bibliomaniac, seeing that the Idiot stopped short at the word "beer."

"The other was 'Well, I dunno. What have you got?'" replied the Idiot.

"And what was Perkins's reply?" asked the Doctor.

"Thaddeus had but one answer for the

inquisitive and thirsty hordes of willing voters. It was this: 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'I have no beer, but I have an unpaid tax-bill which is at your service,'" replied the Idiot. "That was one of the things that helped me to defeat him. What the people want may not be beer. It is *certainly* not tax-bills. But of course this was all said after he was nominated. If he had said it before the primaries he might not have awaked to find himself unknown in his own town and notorious outside of it. There wasn't any fame in the whole business."

"He ought to have said it before, it seems to me," said the Bibliomaniac.

"True," said the Idiot. "It would have spared him lots of trouble; but before the primaries Thaddeus had a high idea as to the intelligence of the people," said the Idiot. He never dreamed that to get aboard the ship of state a man had to paddle his own canoe across a sea of strong drink, but "when he went to the primary and found that it was held in a little hut, on a street paved with mud, next door to a saloon, and surrounded by

a crowd so thirsty that a Niagara of malt liquors would have hardly kept them from cracking, he weakened a little; but when next morning he read in the papers that he had been nominated by a vote of nearly fifteen hundred, he braced up a little and said that the *vox populi* was, after all, the *vox Dei*, and that it ill became him to judge the many worthy ones by the thirsty few, who tried to 'hold him up' for the amber fluid. 'The people are all right, my dear Idiot,' said he. 'Just because that fellow cornered me last night and wanted what he called the "long green" is no reason why I should despair.'"

"I don't exactly understand," said Mr. Whitechoker. "Cornered for the 'long green'? What is the 'long green'?"

"It is a pathetic allusion in the idiom of politics to the two-dollar bill," said the Idiot. "In politics, Mr. Whitechoker, the "long green" is a most important factor. In the first place, the color of it appeals most strongly to the—the—the—well, I may call it the balance of power. This particular balance of power has a strong

liking for green. It symbolizes many things. It is the color most affected by nature. It is the color of—ah—*crème de menthe*. And it is the color of several other things which awaken sentiments of a patriotic nature in the breast of the—the balance of power. Further, it is an appropriate hue for the man who puts it up. But the best of all the qualities of the 'long green' is the intrinsic value of the things it represents, and I venture to say that any man who can command the 'long green' in sufficient bulk can have almost anything he wants in this world politically, particularly in cities where the balance of power is vested in the Independent Clubs and the Taxpayers' Grievance Associations. However, Thaddeus was nominated without the use of the 'long green'; but I noticed one thing that night of the primaries which he did not. Upon his arrival at the hut in which the votes were cast, as soon as he was identified as the candidate, the air was rent with cheers, and a solid block of humanity gathered before the saloon doors, leaving a space large enough for Thad-

deus to walk through into the saloon in case he should feel the necessity; but when he had voted and was seen departing up the street there was not a sound. There was a lack of enthusiasm which would have given a really ambitious candidate nervous prostration in its most aggravated form."

"And how did you account for that?" asked the Bibliomaniac.

"It was simple enough," said the Idiot. "Perkins walked deliberately past the door of the saloon and never stopped in. It was then that I began to be hopeful, and when I told Mrs. Perkins her eyes beamed with joy. She didn't want Thaddeus elected any more than I did."

III

OLD JIM THE GARDENER AND OTHERS

"WHAT you say," said Mr. Whitechoker, after a pause—"what you say concerning the saloons is more than ever convincing to me that in the Prohibition movement lies the hope of our political institutions."

"Precisely," said the Idiot. "And that is all. The Prohibitionists will always have the hope, but the others will have the offices. When lambs eat lions, Mr. Whitechoker, the Prohibition party will win, and not before, unless the Prohibition candidates make the saloon canvass. In Phillipseburg it is true, however, that in ten years the Prohibition vote has steadily grown. In 1884 it was twenty-one. In 1894 it was thirty-one. In ten years from now it may get up to forty-one, granting that this growth continues

and its leaders are not driven to drink by incessant disappointments. It may some day get to the point where it will be the balance of power, and when it does the country will be better off, for the reason that the balance of power will then be incorruptible. A Prohibitionist, in the very nature of things, is a man of solid principle. If he and his friends form Independent Clubs, they will not stand on the bi-planked platform known as 'Good Government for the People: Bock for Us,' nor will he be found declaring that the 'long green' is mightier than Reason. You can't buy a Prohibitionist with money; and he doesn't drink beer, and water does not come in kegs—which reminds me of Thaddeus's one lie in his campaign."

"Did he really lie?" queried Mrs. Pedagog, a little shocked.

"Yes, just once," returned the Idiot. "A delegation waited on him one night—the night after he was nominated. They were three in number, and they had a notion that Thaddeus was what certain politicians call 'fruit.' He was hanging on a

tree ready to be plucked, they thought. Thaddeus knew what they were after just as well as they did, but he never let on; talked about the needs of the country; speculated upon the vast benefits likely to accrue to honest toilers like themselves from the preferment of his party at the polls, and all that, when one of them cut him short with an intimation that the weather had been very dry of late. He said that the community which he and his friends adorned needed irrigation; it was parched, and he and the seventy-five voters he controlled had worked until they were on the verge of tonsilitis to secure Thaddeus's nomination. Thaddeus saw that his hour had come, so he said very plainly that he was sorry to hear that he had been the cause of an epidemic of throat troubles, but he wasn't a doctor and didn't feel that he could prescribe. Then came the lie. 'You see, gentlemen,' he said, 'how necessary it is to me to decline to furnish liquid refreshment to your association. I am not a rich man. If I give it to you I shall have to give it to all, and I fear

you do not realize what an expense that would involve. There are 35,000 people in this town. So little as three glasses of beer apiece would involve an expenditure of $5250.' 'But dey don't all drink,' said the leader. 'Yer dude friends, frinstance; dey wouldn't ask yer fer nuthin'.' 'Oh, wouldn't they!' cried Thaddeus. 'Why, a half-hour before you came here, So-and-So,' naming one of the most prominent citizens of the town, 'called upon me as you are now calling. He represented a hundred of the Mugwump voters of the Third Ward, and what do you suppose he wanted?' The delegation gave it up. 'Champagne!' said Thaddeus. 'I had to deny him what he asked,' he added, sadly, 'and I've lost the Mugwump vote; but it had to be done. If I give you beer, I've got to give champagne to the Mugwumps, lemonade to the Independent Prohibitionists, and pure alcohol to the Socialists who need coaxing. If I owned a hotel it would be different. I might have all these things on tap and invite the whole town to come in and help itself;

but I don't. As it is, I am merely a citizen who, like yourselves, finds it difficult to make both ends meet, and am willing to run for an unsalaried office in the hope of protecting the pockets of the tax-payer when I get there.' "

"And did the delegation see the point?" asked the Doctor.

"They saw their point. They filed out sadly, but as the last one left he turned to Thaddeus, who stood at the door, and said: 'Excuse us for comin', Mr. Perkins. If there is any charge for the use of your parlor for our little chat, let us know. I'm the treasurer of our club.' "

"That was clever," observed the Poet.

"It was indeed," said the Idiot. "For cleverness, the striker in politics is hard to beat, and that's what makes him so hard to deal with. Old Jim the Gardener proved that. It took Thaddeus two weeks to get rid of Old Jim the Gardener."

"And who, pray, was Old Jim the Gardener?" asked Mr. Pedagog.

"He was a little of everybody," said the Idiot. "You see, Thaddeus's fa-

ther had been a resident of Phillipseburg twenty-five years before, and during his residence there had had quite a sizable place. At one time he employed a man named Jim to take charge of the lawns and garden; and when, twenty-five years later, Thaddeus found himself a candidate, Jim, who had passed out of his recollection, appeared on the scene once more. He was a man of infinite variety. The first time he appeared Thaddeus was glad to see him. He didn't recognize him at all, but he was credulous and believed that Old Jim stood before him. Besides, Jim didn't want anything for his vote. Thaddeus was going to get that anyhow; but he was down on his luck, and could use an old coat, or a pair of shoes, or a half-dollar to advantage. He got the half-dollar and went away. Two days later Old Jim turned up again, only this time he wasn't so old. He was ten years younger than he had been when he first called. The rejuvenating influence of the half-dollar was remarkable. Ten dollars would have made a happy schoolboy of him."

OLD JIM THE SECOND

"I don't quite see," said Mr. Whitechoker.

"It was simple enough," said the Idiot. "The second Jim was not the first Jim. It had been rumored about that a man named Jim had once been a favored employé of Perkins Senior, and the willing voter took advantage of the fact. In the neighborhood of fifteen truthful Jameses tried to work the candidate on the strength of old associations. Every one of them remembered some little incident in Thaddeus's past life, none of which Thaddeus could recall, but all of which indicated that his boyhood had been passed largely in being rescued from mad bulls, watery graves, savage dogs, and tramps, with Old Jim always turning up at the right moment to save him. It finally got to the point where every time the front doorbell rang Thaddeus would smile and express his belief that there was another delegate from the Old Jim Independent Club at the door; and Mrs. Perkins declared that she had no idea that there were so many Jims, young or old, in the world."

"Did the supply finally run out?" asked the Doctor, with a smile.

"I don't believe so; but when Thaddeus got to the beginning of his hyena-week, old Jim concluded he'd better keep away. The demand weakened," replied the Idiot. "The last time Old Jim called, Thaddeus was having all he could do to keep from crushing teacups in his hands. He had just returned from a meeting of the General Committee, where he had been flayed alive by some of the other candidates, because of what they called his lack of interest in the fight, which they claimed he was showing, because he wouldn't work more than twenty hours a day. One of them particularly pleased Thaddeus by saying that his ward was lost to the party because, after addressing the tax-payers of his section, Perkins had driven away without speaking to the balance of power, who were waiting for him outside, with a café not two yards distant. 'I've got all I can do blowing off the ward in my own interest without doing it for Mr. Perkins,' he said. All of which galled Thaddeus to

such an extent that he rose to pay his compliments to the committee and critical candidates, in his best manner, when his manager seeing what was about to happen, moved to adjourn, and marched Thaddeus out in double-quick time.

"'I wish you had been addressing our African brothers to-night,' said the manager, as Thaddeus entered his carriage. 'Your face was black enough to make 'em think you'd just come from the Congo. Go home and get to bed, and for Heaven's sake meet me to-morrow with another face. If you can't get your own in shape by that time, borrow one, or this town goes Republican.'

"We drove home in silence. Thaddeus had been conversed with sufficiently for one evening, and I felt that even I would better let him alone. As we drew up to the Perkins house we observed a man sitting in the corner of the front piazza, hidden in the shadow. When we had alighted he rose up and approached us. It was the fifteenth and last Old Jim the Gardener.

"'Hang on to yourself, Thaddeus,' I

said. 'It won't last more than a minute, and then you can go to bed.'

"'Good-evening, Mr. Perkins,' said the visitor.

"'Evening,' replied Thaddeus, shortly.

"'I never thought in th' old days that little Thad 'd ever be runnin' fer Mayor,' said the visitor.

"'No more did any one else,' returned Thaddeus. 'I fancy, if my parents had guessed it, they'd have shipped me to Australia, for the sake of the family name. Who are you, and what do you want?'

"'Ah! ye haven't forgotten me, have ye, Mr. Perkins, afther all I did fer ye when ye was a little chap? Don't ye remember th' time ye upset th' bee-hive, an' I rushed in an' kept th' bastes from stingin' ye?'

"Even in the dark I could see that Thaddeus's eye flashed. He knew what was coming.

"'Oh yes,' he said. 'I remember you well. You are Old Jim the Gardener, are you not?'

"'Sure, an' I knew ye wouldn't forget.

That's what I am, Mr. Perkins: Old Jim the Gardener. Those was good days. Your father was a foine man, an' he had foine boys, too. How's Tommie?'

"'Very well, indeed,' said Thaddeus. Then he tugged me by the sleeve and added, 'This is Tommie, Jim. Tommie, you remember Old Jim, don't you?'

"'Certainly,' said I. 'Jim, how are you?'

"'Sure, an' I'd know ye anywhere, Mr. Thomas—though, bein' as it was so dark, I didn't see yer face well.'

"'It is rather dark,' said Thaddeus, coldly. 'But, Jim, Tom and I have been very anxious to see you again. We were talking about it only yesterday. We don't forget easily, and we were recalling one little incident with which you were connected. You remember the old barn that stood back of the house, don't you?'

"'Faith, don't I!' said Jim, unctuously.

"'Well, one day Tom and I were playing hide-and-seek in that barn, and by mistake upset a pail of bran you had just been preparing for the cow.'

"'Oh, now, Mr. Perkins! Do *you* remimber that?' cried Jim, with delight.

"'I do,' said Thaddeus. 'I have as lively a recollection of it as I have of the bee-hive incident—only it was my brother Harry you saved from the bees.'

"I was afraid we were getting into deep water. Thaddeus never had a brother Harry.

"'Harry, was it?' said Jim, with a slight tinge of disappointment in his tone. 'Oh yes, I remimber now. It was Harry—ah yes, yes, yes. Is Harry livin', Mr. Perkins?'

"'No,' said Thaddeus, 'Harry is gone.'

"'Poor boy!' sighed Jim.

"'But Tom and I were the ones that upset the bran, Jim,' said Thaddeus.

"'So ye were,' said Jim.

"'And you jumped out of the stall with a piece of rope, Jim, and you grabbed Tommie by the neck and me by the waist. You carried us up into the hay-loft and gave us both such a thrashing for that small bit of an accident that we haven't forgotten it.'

"'No, indeed, we haven't, Jim,' said I. 'I can feel that rope yet.'

"'I disremember'— Jim began, but Thaddeus cut him short.

"'Well, Tommie and I have been looking for you for ten years, Jim, to pay back that debt,' said he, 'and if you'll wait here a second while we go in and take our coats off we'll return that thrashing with compound interest for twenty-five years.'

"With this Thaddeus opened the front door with his key. We entered, and after removing our overcoats, returned to Old Jim; but Jim had disappeared, and in the language of that dear old song, 'He never came back.'

"In that way," said the Idiot, "we got rid of Old Jim the Gardener and at least one vote which might have helped us on to victory. Whether the other fourteen stuck to us or not I don't know, but I imagine not, since I saw two of them flirting with the other man on Election Day. It is probable that they had served his family, too, in the good old days."

IV

SPEECHES SPOKEN AND UNSPOKEN

"I PRESUME your friend made a lot of speeches — stump speeches?" said the Doctor.

"Well, no, he didn't," said the Idiot. "It was one of the curious features of this campaign that Thaddeus, who is usually one of the most loquacious of men, crammed about as much silence into the three weeks as it was possible to get into them—that is to say, publicly. In private with myself and Mrs. Perkins and young Thaddeus he'd orate by the hour. He'd begin with 'Here's a speech I'd like to make.' Then he'd strike an attitude like that of a bronze statue in the Park, and gaze at us fiercely for a moment. After an impressive silence he'd plunge in with 'Demagogues and Fellow Inebriates: One of the most pleasurable of the

A STATUESQUE POSE

many thoughts that arise in my mind at this present moment is that my ancestors, having joined the great majority on the other side of the dark river, cannot now witness my humiliation, or penetrate the veil of my hypocrisy, when I stand here and tell you that I consider you the most intelligent body of men that I ever addressed, although my private opinion of you is that you are an incorrigible body of unmitigated strikers. Gentlemen—and I apply the term to you with certain mental reservations, for you are not gentlemen by any means—what are we here for? I am here to ask you for your votes, for unfortunately the franchise is so broad, embracing, as it does, ignorance, viciousness, and corruptibility, that while to a man of principle your votes are a dishonor, they are likewise a necessity. You are here to listen respectfully until I get through, after which you will seek information as to the size of my bank account and my standing in the *Saloon Keepers' Bradstreet*. Well, gentlemen, I am a busted community as far as you are concerned, and the saloon keepers do not

know me. But I do not wish to appear illiberal. I estimate, upon looking about me, that you are three hundred and fifty in number. I will purchase one schooner of beer. Each of you may have his name written upon a piece of paper. The pieces of paper may be placed in a hat of your own selection, and, such is my confidence in your judgment, a chairman elected by your suffrage may draw from that hat one of those slips. He whose name is on that slip may have the beer, or if he chooses, may share it with the rest of you. Gentlemen, thanking you for your attention, and hoping that Election Day and night will show that we are true to our principles, I bid you good-evening. *Sic semper tyrannis. Status quo ante in Honolulu.*"

"So!" cried Mr. Pedagog, who is a Republican. "So! You admit, do you, that to get into office a Democrat has to make terms with these people?"

"No," returned the Idiot, "I admit nothing of the sort. When a Democrat is opposed to a Republican who will refuse to make terms with such people, the

striker cuts no figure in politics. His fangs are drawn. He can do nothing. It is only when the other side is willing to make a bid for him that he has any power. Unfortunately, however, in this case the striker knew that one side at least wanted him. There was a demand, and when there is a demand for the striker he sees to it that there is a supply. He is a business man, and he works on business principles. He will take the money and drink the beer of both parties. He will sell his vote to any one who buys, and then, thanks to the existing ballot law, he will vote as he pleases. This time he cast a complimentary vote for Perkins."

"And yet Perkins was defeated?" said Mr. Pedagog.

"Precisely," said the Idiot. "Out of compliment to Perkins, the strikers voted against him."

Mr. Pedagog tried to think of something to say, but not being much of a politician his mind refused to work. Consequently he missed the "tide which taken at the flood leads on to fortune."

"But speeches were made in Thaddeus's behalf," continued the Idiot. "And considering the fact that I didn't want to have him elected, I was very glad they were made. There was one man who could make campaign speeches of the finest type. One night he said, 'When I make a speech I find that I invariably put my foot in it. When I don't speak I also find that I put my foot in it.' Thaddeus, who had been awaiting his chance, remarked as a diversion, 'You seem to be in it with both feet.' That brought down the house. Everybody who heard it said, 'He's a daisy,' or 'He's the man for the place,' and for a time I was scared. I thought Thaddeus might be elected—they were so enthusiastic over a man who could say a thing like that. I lay awake all that night wondering how I could counteract the effect of his jest, and finally I decided that there was only one thing to do, which was to get the man who was always in it with both feet to go about and make speeches in Thaddeus's behalf. He was the man *I* wanted. I persuaded him to go about

with Thaddeus and make the speeches. A man who could put both feet in it was just the man to beat him, and he went. I was disappointed at first. He made speeches that were really fine. He convinced the voters that Perkins loved them, and that wages would be increased one hundred per cent. if he were elected; but one night he was carried away by his enthusiasm, and in dwelling upon Thaddeus's achievements as a poet he put a spoke in his wheel which effectually killed him. He called him a son of the Muses and a native of Parnassus."

"Is that considered a disgrace in Phillipseburg?" asked the Poet, with a curve on his lip.

"Not at all," said the Idiot. "Only the good people imagined that an attempt had been made to deceive them. They had been told that Thaddeus was born in Phillipseburg, and then to have a campaign orator let the cat out of the bag by saying that he was a native of Parnassus was evidence that they had been betrayed, and that the Democratic party was trying to foist a carpet-bagger

on the community. As one of the Republican orators very properly said, 'The newspaper says he was born in Phillipseburg. Did he deny thot? He did not. This speaker says he was born at Parnassus. Does he deny thot? He does not. What, thin, do we have to conclude in conclusion? Wan of two horns of a dilemma. Either he says thot which is untrue, or else he's twins. Is he twins? No. Thin whot? He's a desayver!'"

The Poet laughed. "It's a wonder they didn't investigate the Muses," he said. "If they had done that they'd have discovered that there never was a Muse named Perkins, so that his claim to parentage there would have been shown to be unfounded."

"That's precisely what Thaddeus himself said," returned the Idiot. "If it hadn't been that the Republican General Committee had a man on it who knew what a Muse was I think very likely they'd have made a great point about that."

"It's singular, I think," observed the Poet, "considering the standard of edu-

cation which according to your story prevails in Phillipseburg, that there was found even on the Republican General Committee a man so erudite."

"I can only account for it myself," said the Idiot, "on the assumption that the individual had a son in college who could enlighten the old gentleman. However it was, they made the discovery in time to save the Muses the annoyance of a political investigation."

"Then you find that campaign speeches are of little value?" suggested the Doctor.

"They have no value whatsoever outside of the philological enrichment of the English language," returned the Idiot. "To Thaddeus they were profitable in the new words they taught him. His vocabulary always was a good one, but I think he will ultimately recover his campaign expenses from the sale of a series of papers he is writing on 'Words I Have Met: Being a Few Speculations upon the Philology of Politics, With a Brief Essay upon the Orthoepy of the Professional Striker.'"

"If he could sell that title at space rates he'd make a fortune," said the Poet.

"He could indeed," said the Idiot. "But he'll make more by retaining it for his own use."

"I shall be quite interested to see that book when it comes out," said Mr. Pedagog. "If there's one thing that interests me more than another, it is the study of language."

"You'll find it up to your expectations, I think," said the Idiot. "There will be one drawback, however. It will be impossible in writing to convey any idea as to the inflection or the gestures of the speakers who introduced these words to Perkins. If he could publish the book in an Edison phonograph with a kinetoscope attachment, instead of putting it out in printed form, bound up between covers, it would be far more interesting. For instance, there is the word 'incubent.' To get the full force and value of such a word you need to hear it spoken by its inventor. Thaddeus met this word one afternoon at a small gathering of men who took the campaign as seriously as if

it were a dose of pure cod-liver oil. They waited on Thaddeus to assure him of their support, and the spokesman, in spite of repeated invitations to sit down, insisted upon remaining on his feet while he delivered his address. It was a first-rate address too, and well worthy of being delivered standing. In fact, if the speaker had delivered it while sitting down, it would not have been half so effective, since it needed to be punctuated by stoopings and straightenings, by lofty swoops of the right hand, by leanings to the right and left, but more particularly by sudden poisings on the toes, which increased by a foot or more the stature of the speaker, and so giving to his remarks an emphasis which made doubt as to his sincerity absolutely impossible."

"May I ask what was the significance of the word incubent?" asked Mr. Whitechoker.

"It was a synonym for incumbent," said Thaddeus. "The speaker began by solemnly assuring the candidate that he and the other gentlemen present were 'here.' This was not susceptible to denial, and

Thaddeus acquiesced. The committee undoubtedly were there. There was material evidence to that effect. He then went on to say that Thaddeus was a gentleman, and perhaps fearing that the candidate had not been notified of the fact, assured him that he had been nominated for the highest office in the gift of the people of Phillipseburg. To this the candidate also agreed. He had known it for two or three days; but he didn't let his visitors into that secret, although he manifested no surprise at the information. 'We, Mr. Perkins,' continued the speaker, raising himself on his toes, 'support you because we think you are the man for the place. We want no Purantic laws—'"

"Excuse me," interrupted Mr. Whitechoker; "but what was that word?"

"Purantic," replied the Idiot. "That was another new word. It is a political adjective signifying Puritanic, which the speaker explained by saying, 'By means of which I mean the blue-laws of New England — but we do want clean govi-ment, which you will give us. We feel that you will honor the chair; the chair

will not honor you.' And then came the great word. Raising his arm almost to the ceiling and standing on his toes, the speaker added, thunderously enough to wake the baby in the nursery above, 'Can the same be said of the present incubent?' The other members of the committee shook their heads. It was evident that they did not think the present incubent was a great man, and as it was Perkins's agreeable week, he also shook his head, and intimated that he thought the speaker was undeniably right. And so it went on for thirty-eight minutes. New words were coined at the rate of five a minute, until finally, the speaker sat down, and Thaddeus, who had been wildly endeavoring to keep his face straight for the past twenty minutes, felt compelled to bring out his little brown jug and assure the committee that he would be glad to pay the rent of their club-rooms and settle up the accounts of the delinquent members, in order that so worthy an institution as the one they represented might be maintained to fight for tariff reform and an honest dollar forever."

"Ah!" put in Mr. Pedagog. "They did pull his—ah—his leg, then?"

"No," returned the Idiot. "Not a bit of it. He gave them ten dollars, it is true, but see what he got back in the way of new words! It's a mean man and a bad business man who is unwilling to pay a paltry ten dollars for five hundred dollars' worth of additions to his vocabulary."

"And did these fellows support him?" asked Mr. Whitechoker.

"Oh, as for that," said the Idiot, "the existing ballot law prevents us from determining. But as I remember the figures, he didn't run more than eighty-nine votes behind his ticket in their district."

V

THE SILVER LINING

"I JUDGE from what you have told us of your friend's campaign," said Mr. Whitechoker, "that a candidate's life is not a happy one. Is there no let-up to his miseries?"

Mr. Pedagog frowned. He always frowned when the good clergyman let his tongue slip into the vernacular of the Idiot.

"Was there no alleviation?" added Mr. Whitechoker, hastily, himself observing his error.

"Oh yes," returned the Idiot. "The cloud of a political canvass has its silver lining, just like all other clouds. The man who more than any one else managed Thaddeus's canvass really kept him alive, I believe. If it hadn't been for him, Thaddeus would undoubtedly have thrown himself into the river."

"He was an experienced politician?" queried Mr. Pedagog.

"He was a Past Grand Master of the Art of Politics," said the Idiot, with enthusiasm. "In his hands Politics was not only a science, it was lifted to the level of an art; and after the returns came in and Thaddeus knew he was defeated, his chief regret was for his manager, whose disappointment was great; and he told me in confidence before he went to bed that night that while he never wanted to enter the political arena again, he was glad he had made the fight, because it had brought him so much into contact with the ex-Senator. His manager was an ex-State Senator, and Thaddeus always addressed him by that title. It was, 'Mr. Mayor, you'll have to do this,' and 'Very well, ex-Senator, if you say so, so must it be,' with them all the time. Thaddeus's confidence in the man was only equalled by one other bit of trustfulness I ever knew of."

"And what was that?" asked the Bibliomaniac.

"My own confidence in the man," replied the Idiot; "and when Perkins and I

agree in matters of that kind, there is no shadow of room for distrust. I truly never saw such a man as the ex-Senator in my life before. He was always genial, full of entertaining anecdotes of how previous candidates had done things, a thorough judge of human nature, and with a faculty for talking to people he had never seen before as if he had known them all his life, that excited my highest admiration. I remember one afternoon he and Thaddeus and I were walking up the main avenue of Phillipseburg, and we saw a more or less important-looking personage bearing down upon us.

"'Who is this fellow?' asked Thaddeus.

"'I give it up,' said the ex-Senator; 'but I guess he knows. He acts like a man who'd heard of himself. I'll introduce you to him.'

"'How the deuce 'll you do that if you don't know him?' asked Thaddeus.

"'Ho!' laughed the ex-Senator. 'If that was the hardest thing we had to do, I'd write you a certificate of election to-night.'

"Then he hailed the stranger," continued the Idiot. "The fellow looked surprised, but stopped when the ex-Senator said to him: 'I want you to know our candidate for Mayor. This is Mr. Perkins; we've got him on our ticket this year, and we hope to elect him.'

"'Well, I guess you'll do it,' said the stranger. 'Everybody I see says he's likely to get in. I was putting up some awnings for Mr. Baisley up on High Street this morning, and Mr. Baisley's man told me everything was going your way.'

"'That's good news,' said Perkins.

"'How is the awning business?' asked the ex-Senator, cordially. 'Pretty brisk?'

"'Yes, considering the times,' said the stranger.

"'Well, do what you can for us,' said the ex-Senator. 'We want to carry this election unanimously if we can, you know.'

"'Certainly,' said the stranger. 'But I'm a New-Yorker, myself, and can't vote.'

"'Oh, we understand that,' said the ex-Senator, without a tremor; 'but a man in your position has influence. I've seen you at work here in town, and I guess if you'll put in a word or two with your friends it'll help. You aren't related to Farrell, are you?'

"'No, my name's Tompkins,' returned the other.

"'I know; but didn't Farrell's daughter marry into the Tompkins family? I'm sure I heard so; but anyhow, Mr. Tompkins, I'm glad to have had this chance to have Mr. Perkins meet you, and we hope you won't forget us.' With which Tompkins walked off more important than ever, and our party moved on.

"'Ex-Senator,' said Thaddeus, 'you're a wonder. Did you ever see Tompkins before?'

"'No.'

"'Who's Farrell?'

"'Farrell? Oh, Farrell's my decoy relative. Whenever I want to find out a man's name I ask him if he isn't related to Farrell, and it generally works. As

you saw, this fellow immediately told me his name was Tompkins when I spoke of Farrell.'

"'But if you'd asked him his name straight out he'd have told you.'

"'That's true enough; but that's not politics. Tompkins thinks now that I knew he was Tompkins all along. He has an idea we've been looking for him and that he amounts to something.'

"'And is there such a person as Farrell?' I asked.

"'Not that I know of,' returned the ex-Senator.

"'Well, does it always work?' asked Thaddeus.

"'It never failed but once,' said the ex-Senator; 'and that was when the boys put up a game on me. I introduced old man Dobbs, who was running for Assembly, to a fellow just as I introduced you to Tompkins, and when I asked him if he wasn't related to Farrell he knocked me over.'

"'Knocked you down?' said Thaddeus.

"'No,' replied the ex-Senator, with a

laugh over his reminiscence. 'But he might just as well have. He floored me with, "Me? Me related to Farrell? Begobs, I *am* Farrell!"'

"You can very well imagine," said the Idiot, "that while he was with the ex-Senator, Thaddeus led a perfectly happy life, though I don't think his period of chaperonage was an unmixed delight to the ex-Senator, particularly when Thaddeus reached his hyena-week, at which time, after an hour and a half of the hardest kind of work trying to infuse a little geniality into the candidate's nature, he reverted to his suggestion that a competent comedian should be imported from New York, made up to look like Thaddeus, with whom the balance of the canvass could be made.

"'You'd better get a tragedian instead of a comedian,' said Thaddeus. 'A man of death would more fully represent me at this stage of the game.'

"'We don't want a tragedian,' said the ex-Senator. 'Comedians are better for politics. We want a man who'll go about and jolly the voters. You couldn't jolly

a hitching-post in your present frame of mind.' "

"There's another new word," said Mr. Pedagog. "Jollying! What is the meaning of the verb to jolly?"

"To jolly?" cried the Idiot. "Why, my dear sir, where have you lived? To jolly is as old as the franchise."

"That may be, and yet until this I have never encountered it," said Mr. Pedagog; "and I doubt that my good friend Mr. Whitechoker, in all his experience with the vernacular, has ever heard it before," he added, severely.

"It is new to me," observed Mr. Whitechoker, meekly.

"Well, I am surprised," said the Idiot. "Why, jollying plays so large a part in politics that I've really found myself wondering why politics isn't called jollytics. These schools of political science will never be truly successful until they have a chair in jollying with a good jollier to fill it. I think the genial old gentleman who occasionally imbibes is the man for the place. But to jolly is to—er—to slap, to treat, to set up."

"Well, I declare!" said the Bibliomaniac. "It appears to me that your definition is worse than your verb. Do you mean to tell me that by slapping a voter you can win his sympathy?"

"Certainly," returned the Idiot. "A candidate can do more with a slap than he can with an argument. Voters—that is, the balance of power—don't want logic; they want slaps, set-ups, jollying. If they get the slap, they know they're going to have the set-up."

"Well, I suppose you know what you mean," said Mr. Pedagog, wearily; "but I'll be hanged—I mean blessed—if I do."

"Far be it from me to keep you in ignorance," said the Idiot. "I'll try to explain. You are aware, I suppose, that there is such a thing as human nature in the world?"

"I have observed some of it," said Mr. Pedagog, dryly. "Never very much in you, however. There's something supernatural about you."

"You flatter me," said the Idiot. "I am only mortal. But, as I suggested, and as you agreed, you are aware that there

is such a thing as human nature in the world, and the value of jollying is based entirely upon it. The general run of human beings are proud of a seeming intimacy with conspicuous persons. Now, the voter, pure and simple—if there is a pure and simple voter—is, as a rule, of the inconspicuous type, and often it happens that he is jealous of the prominence of the candidate. To offset this jealous feeling, the candidate, meeting the inconspicuous voter on the street, slaps him on the back and shakes him by the shoulders, or pokes him in the ribs, cracks a joke with him, and ends up by asking him to have a cigar or to take a drink. This is why I think my genial friend would successfully fill a chair of jollying in a school of political sciences. He knows how to do it, and could give points even to college men. But this jollying act, this slap, is very pleasing to the person who is slapped, because he thinks it makes the public think he is a close personal friend of the candidate, and he adds an imaginary cubit to his stature as he walks home. A man has got to be a good deal of an actor,

or a perfect man-about-town, however, to be a good jollier; and while Thaddeus has taken part in amateur theatricals, he wasn't equal to this, and as a man-about-town he is only moderately successful. He was the worst jollier I ever saw, because when he slapped a citizen or poked his ribs, it was done in such a way that it resembled an assault rather than an act of conciliation—in fact, he did lose one vote by a slap. He hit a cab-driver on the back at a mass-meeting, intending it, of course, as an act of sociability; but the cab-driver had been drinking, and was having all he could do to stand up anyhow. The slightest tap would have upset him; but Thaddeus, failing to note his condition, gave him a whack that sent him headlong under the presiding officer's table. The fellow was madder than a hornet, and departed breathing vengeance against the Democracy, from the Game Constable up to President Cleveland.

"'That settles it,' said the ex-Senator, when we told him. 'No more personal jollying unless you have an idea you're going to win this fight by a unanimous

vote. If I believed that, I'd go out and jolly with you after your peculiar way. There are about nine hundred voters here I'd like to jolly into the river.' "

"Then in politics familiarity does not breed contempt?" said the Doctor.

"Yes, it does," said the Idiot. "Only it makes the candidate despise himself. I remember Thaddeus's return home after his first experience with that sort of thing. He was white as a sheet, and Mrs. Perkins was quite alarmed. She thought he was about to collapse. There was nothing the matter with him physically, however. He had been slapping inebriates on the back and digging the ribs of loafers for two hours, and one of the loafers had dug back and called him Taddy, and it made him sick in his mind.

"'Look at my necktie,' he added.

"We looked. It had been a white tie when Thaddeus put it on. Now it was a gray, dusty black.

"'That illustrates a discovery I've made,' said Thaddeus. 'The people, when they argue on a political question, stand directly before the person they argue with,

stretch their fingers apart as far as they can, and emphasize their points by laying that outstretched hand, like a waffle, on the chest of the person to be convinced. My necktie was ruined by a coal-heaver, who hoped thereby to impress upon my mind the importance of his following, controlling, as he did, one hundred and seventy-five votes, which I could have if I'd come and speak upon the issues of the day at O'Brien's Whiskey Palace in Grape Street. I see now why candidates are not allowed to wear evening dress, as well as why voters of that stamp almost invariably go without neckties. A dress-shirt would look like an illustrated volume on palmistry after one meeting with those waffle-handed sons of toil.

"'It was awful,' Thaddeus added. 'I thought I'd never get away; but thanks to the ex-Senator I got out of it. He saw me getting white, and up he came, impatiently snapping to the cover of his watch. "Really, Mr. Perkins," he said, "you'll have to hurry. It's after time now, and you know the engagement on the hill."

Well, I didn't know it, but I pretended to, and out we went.'

"'Where is the engagement on the hill?' asked Thaddeus, wearily, as they entered the carriage.

"'At your own house,' said the ex-Senator.

"'Didn't I tell you I wouldn't have this confounded business brought into my house?' said Thaddeus, querulously.

"'Yes, you did, my dear fellow,' returned the manager, kindly. 'But this time it couldn't be helped. You keep your bed at home, and the engagement I have for you now is that you go home right away and go to bed.'"

"I don't wonder Thaddeus liked that fellow," said Mr. Pedagog.

"Nor I," returned the Idiot. "For to my mind he is one of the salt of the earth. He was unselfishness personified; his own comfort was nothing so long as he could by a personal sacrifice save Thaddeus from annoyance, and, as I told Perkins, if he ever forgets the ex-Senator he deserves himself to be thrown into the most oblivious kind of oblivion ob-

SEE?

tainable. And he replied that he agreed with me, and as long as he lives I believe that the ex-Senator's name will stand pretty high up on the list of his real friends."

VI

CONCLUSION

"THERE was one other bright spot in Thaddeus's campaign," said the Idiot; "that was his venerable friend, the editor of the Phillipseburg *Evening Star*. A country town like Phillipseburg never amounts to anything unless it has an evening paper. Morning papers count for nothing. They never get out in time for the men who have to go to the city to read them; but the editor of an evening paper has all day to work, and as he relies on the New York morning papers for his news and nine-tenths of his editorials, he manages to present to his readers a very creditable journal. Of course it is a great tax upon his eyesight and his thumb, but generally he is equal to the task."

"Excuse me," interrupted Mr. Pedagog.

"You speak of a great tax upon the thumb of the editor of a country paper. I don't quite understand."

"Naturally, not being familiar with the methods of country editors," said the Idiot. "If, however, you had ever spent a morning with the editor of an evening journal published in the suburbs, and seen how industriously his thumb works with the scissors, cutting out that which has pleased the editorial eye, you would comprehend my meaning at once. Country editors suffer from what financiers call coupon paralysis; it always attacks the thumb, although among financiers it comes from handling coupon scissors, while with the rural editor it is the direct result of too close application to the editorial shears. It imparts a tired feeling to the thumb, which is not to be remedied by anything save absolute rest. But the thumb of the editor of the *Evening Star* is a power. It has worked incessantly for years, and has as yet shown no signs of weakening, although there are persons who predict for it a hard future, because it has got into a rut. Whatever the editor's

intellect may prompt his thumb to do, the thumb, such is the power of habit, insists upon going straight ahead in its own way. The consequence is, the old gentleman, who is personally one of the most delightful fellows in the world, and a man of whom Thaddeus is very fond, is completely ruled by that recalcitrant thumb. I have heard it said that it is some other man's thumb rules him; but Thaddeus denies that. He says there is no power on earth that could move his editorial friend, provided his conscience is once aroused, and that the old gentleman, once settled in his mind that he was right, would not yield to all the thumbs in creation backed by a majority of the fore and little fingers of all mankind."

"Which proves that he is a man of principle," said Mr. Whitechoker.

"He is; and that is why we all admire him," said the Idiot. "He opposed Thaddeus on principle. Thaddeus was a Democrat, and therefore politically was not to be trusted. The old gentleman honestly believed that, and lost no time in saying it. His shears worked day and night,

cutting Thaddeus's party into bits, and then he'd toss the bits into the air and blow them into mere nothingness—and he really did effective work. Every four or five days he would pass his shears over to his son and put his pen into the inkpot, and take a dab at Perkins in a way that gave Perkins the most unmixed delight. Perkins, as I have already said, had no political record, but he had been more or less outspoken on the subject of bummers drawing pensions. Some time before his nomination he had said, in a letter written to the *Evening Star*, that the party which was responsible for the passage of laws which gave a pension to every man who lost his breath running away from the enemy in the Rebellion had hauled up a piratical pension flag, and of course that was the old gentleman's cue. He wrote editorials about Old Glory that would have aroused the patriotism of a clam, drawing so vivid a picture of Perkins's affiliations with rebel brigadiers that the candidate never dared venture to retire at night without first having looked under

his bed to see if there was not a secessionist concealed there."

"And do you call work of that kind effective?" asked the Bibliomaniac.

"It was indeed," said the Idiot. "You wouldn't suppose it could be, but in politics it is. The minds of voters are easily swayed, and in Phillipseburg one who could even suggest that a man was not entitled to draw a pension because his eyes were weakened by reading the *Century's* war papers would lose the Grand Army vote wholly, nine-tenths of the votes of the Sons of Veterans, and a full two-thirds of the votes in the Loyal Legion of Grandsons of Veterans. The veterans are a very sensitive body of men all through, and so loyal to each other that, once a man is admitted to their ranks, they resent, as a whole, any aspersions cast upon the individual, irrespective of the individual's merit. With the deserving members of these organizations Perkins was in fullest sympathy, but he could never understand why, thirty years after the war, there should be more deserving survivors of that dreadful conflict than

there were twenty years after it. In fact, he went so far as to allude to the Dependent Pension Law as an Act for the Fostering of the Veteran Manufacturing Industry (Unlimited), and publicly expressed his surprise that our pension rolls do not include the names of any of the heroes disabled by service at the battle of Bunker Hill, or upon the occasion of the Boston Tea Party. This he termed an unjust discrimination. But nobody but cold, heartless, unpatriotic, Jeff-Davis-loving voters sympathized with this view, and the result was that the readers of the *Evening Star* came to look upon Thaddeus as a Copperhead, and expressed some wonder that he did not carry the courage of his convictions so far as to fly the Confederate flag from the roof of his house, and hire a German band to play Dixie in front of it for eight hours a day."

"What influence would all this have on a man's availability for the Mayoralty?" asked the Poet, who felt a little sore over the defeat of a brother in rhyme.

"Much," said the Idiot. "In the first

place, according to the *Star*, the South was ready to spring into the saddle again the minute Perkins was elected. You can see how that is. The Civil War isn't over by any means. Hostilities have ceased temporarily only. By an agreement between the North and the South, Lee surrendered; but it was stipulated that the moment Perkins was elected Mayor of Phillipseburg, it was to begin all over again."

"Tutt, tutt!" cried Mr. Pedagog. "Don't be foolish."

"I'm only telling you the impression the venerable editor of the *Evening Star* gave his readers. I don't myself believe that General Grant was a party to any such agreement; but the *Star* led everybody to believe that he was, and of course all the patriots voted the other way, and the timid souls, fearing the carnage of another conflict, flocked into the opposition camp as a means of preserving their lives and their homes."

"Wasn't there any fear that if elected he might turn the city over to the British?" laughed the Poet.

"Oh, indeed, yes," returned the Idiot. "That was another factor in the defeat. Perkins, according to common report, had a special aversion to all things American. He had Persian and Turkish rugs on his floors; Bohemian glass on his table; French pictures on his walls; he wore English clothes, imported hats, and, worst of all, had once spoken publicly on the importance of English in the public schools. His love of imported rugs and glass and clothes and pictures was entirely due to his hatred of American workingmen. He loved to see workingmen starve. If he had been asked to explain the difference between an ingrain carpet of American make and a Persian rug he couldn't have done it, which proved that he chose the latter out of pure cussedness. The people couldn't understand why he preferred to drink out of a goblet of Bohemian pattern, which if carelessly dropped on the floor would shiver into countless atoms, rather than have an American tumbler at less expense that could be thrown down three flights of stairs on to a marble floor with-

out even cracking, unless that preference were due to an unholy desire to see foreigners thrive and his fellow-countrymen falling of hunger. The workingmen of Phillipseburg were made to believe that the election of Perkins meant the entire cessation of labor in the community; and as many of them were told so by their employers, who have been carrying on their respective businesses for philanthropic reasons only for many years, they found it advisable to believe it, and again Perkins suffered."

"Well, who on earth did vote for him, then?" asked Mrs. Pedagog.

"That's one of the mysteries of the whole thing," returned the Idiot. "We haven't really been able to find out. I think, however, that Perkins voted for himself, though he says he didn't. Then his rival, who was a very delightful, good fellow, voted for him. One of the Old Jims may have voted for him. His manager did. A great many of his friends did. The General Committee may have, though I think it quite likely that the other side got them by a small majority;

but at the outside I can't account for more than two hundred of Perkins's votes. Where the other twenty-five hundred came from we shall never know. It may be that the inspectors saw double, or it may be they got tired counting the other man's ballots, and 'estimated' the final result in such a way as to give the other man the victory he had so gallantly won, and at the same time spare Perkins's feelings.

"At any rate," continued the Idiot, "some people voted for Perkins, but fortunately not enough; and on Tuesday night, after an exciting day travelling around the town seeing how things were looking, Perkins settled down at home to receive the returns. At eight o'clock he knew what had happened, and when he told Mrs. Perkins she shed a few tears, but they were tears of joy. She was so glad she couldn't help it; and as for Perkins himself, he breathed a deep sigh of relief and whispered to me, 'I know now how a prisoner feels who expects a sentence of two years and gets let off with thirty days.'

"'Yes, you do,' put in one of his friends who had overheard him; 'but you'll be like that prisoner in another respect. It won't be long before you are in it again. A life of crime once started is hard to stop. They'll come after you for Congress next fall.'

"'Possibly,' said Thaddeus. 'And do you know what I'll do?'

"'No,' said I. 'What?'

"'I'll ask them if they see any green, long or short, in my eye; and when they answer no, I'll tell 'em that I don't either. There isn't enough there or in my pocket to appeal to the balance of power, and until there is the only thing I'll run for is the 9.05 train in the morning.'

"And with that," said the Idiot, "Thaddeus led the way into the supper-room, where we ate heartily for two hours, and washed politics out of remembrance with stuffs that would have sent the Prohibition party into hysterics."

THE END

RUNNING FOR THE 9.05

Bangs, John Kendrick, B21
Three weeks in politics thr